

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 00824 230800Z

ACTION EA-12

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CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-12 /067 W

-----126894 231120Z /10

R 230520Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9695

USIA WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 0824

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL SN

SUBJECT: EDITORIAL COMMENT ON DEFSEC BROWN'S FEBRUARY 21 SPEECH

1. IN FIRST EDITORIAL COMMENT SINCE WE ISSUED FULL TEXT OF
DEFENSE SECRETARY BROWN'S LOS ANGELES SPEECH FEBRUARY 21,
"STRAITS TIMES" TODAY SAYS SPEECH "SHOULD GO A LONG WAY
TO REASSURE ASIANS THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT TURNING AWAY FROM
THEM" BECAUSE "IT WENT BEYOND PLATITUDES." FULL TEXT
FOLLOWS:

2. "SINCE END OF VIETNAM WAR AND ADVENT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S
POLICY OF DE-ESCALATING AMERICAN TROOP STRENGTH IN KOREA,
NON-COMMUNIST ASIAN COUNTRIES HAVE BEGUN TO BE HAUNTED BY
UNEASY FEELING OF INSECURITY. DESPITE REPEATED PLEDGES AND
STATEMENTS FROM WASHINGTON THAT UNITED STATES WOULD
CONTINUE TO LIVE UP TO TREATY COMMITMENTS AND WOULD
NOT ABDICATE RESPONSIBILITIES AS GLOBAL POWER, THERE
HAS ALWAYS SOMEHOW BEEN UNFILLED CREDIBILITY GAP.
BUT SPEECH BY AMERICAN DEFENSE SECRETARY HAROLD BROWN
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IN LOS ANGELES ON MONDAY, IN WHICH HE STRESSED THEME
OF UNITED STATES CONTINUING TO BE MAJOR FACTOR IN
PACIFIC, SHOULD GO LONG WAY TO REASSURE ASIANS THAT
U.S. WAS NOT TURNING AWAY FROM THEM. REASSURING ELE-
MENT IN WHAT SECRETARY BROWN SAID LIES IN FACT THAT
HE WENT BEYOND PLATITUDES. HE MADE TWO IMPORTANT
POINTS: FIRST, APART FROM KOREA, PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED

TO MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVEL OF COMBAT FORCES IN ASIA,
AND SECOND, SEVERAL ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS WILL BE
INTRODUCED OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS.

3. "GREATEST PORTION OF U.S. MILITARY CAPABILITY IN
AREA WILL BE DEPLOYED IN WESTERN PACIFIC AS WELL AS IN
AND UNDER SEAS. DETERMINATION NOT TO GET EMBROILED IN
ANOTHER LAND WAR IN ASIA IS, UNDERSTANDABLY, UNSHAKEN.
BUT MR. BROWN HAS INDICATED THAT THESE FORCES CAN BE
QUICKLY REDEPLOYED IN EMERGENCY. WITH HIGHLY POTENT
AND SOPHISTICATED ARSENAL AT THEIR DISPOSAL AND DEFINITE
REALIZATION THAT THEY HAVE ROLE TO PLAY IN KEEPING
EQUILIBRIUM, AMERICANS CAN BE STABILIZER FROM JAPAN IN
NORTHEAST ASIA TO ASEAN SUB-REGION CLOSER TO HOME.
IN PARTICULAR, MR. BROWN HAS EMPHASIZED SEVENTH FLEET
AS COUNTER TO GROWING NAVAL POTENTIAL OF SOVIET UNION.
UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, CHANCES ARE BETTER THAT
PACIFIC BASIN WILL ACHIEVE DEGREE OF PEACE AND STA-
BILITY."

HOLDRIDGE

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